

77

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

9 December 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT: Building - Editorial Position of Washington Post
and Times Herald

1. In accordance with your request of this date, I surveyed the file of clippings in the Washington Post and Times Herald since March of this year in order to determine what errors of fact might have been presented which could be corrected by a submission to the Letters to the Editor.

2. With the exception of a statement in the 4 November issue that CIA intended to use a "choice slice of Potomac riverfront" which might otherwise be available for park land, I could find no substantial factual error which it would be possible to attribute directly to the editorial staff of the Post. Although the published material, taken as a whole, indicates opposition to our locating at Langley, such statements as are inaccurate or misleading seem in all cases to be attributed to non Post personnel. It would seem of little profit to charge the Post with "slanting" the news because of the commonness of such practice. Because of the inconsistent and incomplete positions taken by certain interested groups at various times, however, and because of the false impressions that may be left with various readers due to the necessary discontinuity of reporting, there might be merit in a brief presentation concentrating on key points, sticking closely to recital of fact and avoiding criticism, either direct or by implication, of specific persons or groups. As an example of the type of issue which probably should not be raised, from the public relations viewpoint, is the obvious self-interest of those who, while having no personal nor official interest in Langley, have proposed alternative sites.

3. Key points proposed for consideration in any CIA release at this time are:

a. CIA will not use a "choice slice of Potomac riverfront" for its site. The proposed site is well back from the river and a wide belt of park land will flank the proposed Parkway along the riverfront. In addition, it is the intention of CIA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

to harmonize the construction with the landscape, since one of the attractions is its parklike quality.

b. The need for CIA to operate in some isolation is not seriously questioned and the reasons for this have been adequately explained to the Congress, although it is not possible to discuss them publicly in any detail. A CIA site completely surrounded by Federal lands offers this isolation to a degree that cannot be approached by any of the alternative site offers. Because of its attraction to the parklike surroundings, as well as the need for continued isolation, CIA can be expected to seek the continuation of the present topography, forestation, etc., of the present Bureau of Public Roads tract.

c. The location of CIA at Langley would impose no additional burden upon the taxpayers of Fairfax County. The Langley site is presently owned by the Federal Government and off the tax rolls. Purchase of private land and its conversion to Federal use would lower the tax base. The cost of both sewage disposal service offered by the County and the water offered by the City of Falls Church would be paid by CIA on the basis of use. Both of these transactions, from the point of view of the Governmental units concerned, are sound business which will result in increased revenues and, therefore, in ultimate benefit to taxpayers.

d. The elected governing officials of both Fairfax and Arlington Counties (the Boards of Supervisors), as well as the Fairfax County Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council, have expressed their approval of CIA's building at Langley.

e. On the basis of publicly available information, the majority of residents who would be directly affected also favor Langley as a site. As the Washington Post noted in an article on 6 November, petitions circulated in the Langley-McLean area resulted in the signatures of 700 persons opposed and 2600 persons favoring the Langley site for CIA. These are the facts, despite the contrary impression sought to be created by a small group of articulate opponents. The majority of the residents would seem to accept CIA's view that due to the present

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

residential distribution of the bulk of its employees there would be no substantial movement into the Langley area, as there probably would be if selection were made of, e.g., the Winkler tract, which is inconvenient of access for many of CIA's employees.

f. Although some opponents of the Langley site have charged CIA with excessive secrecy, the facts are that the Congress and the concerned Governmental bodies have been provided with all necessary factual information available to the Agency which would assist them in reaching a sound determination. The only substantial, helpful fact which CIA has been compelled to withhold is the exact number of employees who will be involved, and the reasons of national security for withholding this information are self-evident.

4. . Due to the imminence of the meeting of the National Capital Planning Commission, expected to offer a recommendation on the Langley site (15, 16 December), there would probably be merit in withholding any release until after that meeting has been held.

25X1A9a

Assistant General Counsel

OGC:RFB:mez

Distribution:

Orig. & 1 - DD/S

1 - Subject - *Self - Landed*

1 - Signer ✓

1 - OGC Chrono

CONFIDENTIAL